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President: Mr. Soborun (Vice-President) ..... (Mauritius)

Contents

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010

Coordination, programme and other questions* (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies*

(b) Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2013*

(g) Tobacco or health*

Social and human rights questions*

(i) Genetic privacy and non-discrimination*

* Items considered together.

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In the absence of Mr. Ali (Malaysia), Mr. Soborun (Mauritius), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Implementation of and follow-up to major United Nations conferences and summits (*continued*)

(b) Review and coordination of the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/65/80-E/2010/77)

1. **Mr. Diarra** (Special Adviser for Africa and High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010 (A/65/80-E/2010/77), said that preparations were well under way for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. National consultations had taken place throughout 2009 with a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Governments, Parliaments, civil society and the private sector, to produce input for regional reviews. The outcome documents for the regional review meetings for the Asia-Pacific region and the African region, both of which had been completed, stressed that the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action remained incomplete.

2. A series of pre-conference events had been planned. The first event, organized with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization in December 2009, had examined the impact of the global financial crisis on the productive capacities and trading relations of the least developed countries. Other events would cover such key issues as: achieving a smooth transition following graduation from least-developed-country status; challenges and opportunities arising from climate change; human rights dimensions of development; and innovative methods of mobilizing financing for development. He was working with civil society, parliamentarians and the private sector to ensure broad participation in the Conference. A steering committee would manage civil society participation, while a guide to mobilizing parliamentary support had been prepared in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Preparations for getting the private sector involved had begun and a forum on investment would be held during the Conference. A brainstorming meeting was currently under way in New York to synthesize lessons learned from the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action in order to improve the substantive content of the next development agenda and the methodology for monitoring content.

3. The Fourth Conference was a major undertaking of the United Nations system and the international community and required adequate resources to ensure its success. His Office had prepared a project document to mobilize international financial support and he had held consultations with donor countries, emerging donors and international organizations. However, the response had been muted, with the exception of India, Turkey and the United Nations Development Programme. He commended their generosity and urged others to expedite their plans to provide financial resources to the Trust Fund for the Least Developed Countries.

4. The report came at a time of cautious optimism for the global economy. It was encouraging that, on average, growth of the gross domestic product (GDP) of the least developed countries had reached the target of 7 per cent set by the Brussels Programme of Action. However, performance was always mixed for such a diverse group of countries. Only 11 countries had exceeded the 7 per cent target, while 12 countries had grown by less than 3 per cent. In the Asian least developed countries, GDP growth had dropped by almost two percentage points to 5.2 per cent. There had been a steep decline in GDP in the Pacific countries, driven in part by increased transport costs, lower income from tourism and the effects of the tsunami in Samoa. The earthquake that had struck Haiti in January 2010 had been devastating: at least 200,000 people had died, 300,000 had been injured, and some 2 million had been displaced. The economy had been devastated and much of the country's infrastructure had been destroyed. More than $9 billion had been pledged at the International Donors' Conference towards a New Future for Haiti. It was crucial for pledges to be delivered in full and on time; only 2 per cent of them had been disbursed to date.

5. Poverty remained endemic in the least developed countries. More than half of the population of those countries lived in poverty and suffered from hunger, while the countries themselves were lacking in productive capacity and structural transformation. In only seven least developed countries did manufacturing account for more than 15 per cent of GDP. To improve

productive capacity, the least developed countries must adopt development policies that focused on agriculture, services and industrial transformation, with an emphasis on job creation. A timely development-oriented conclusion of the Doha Round would be an important step towards improving international trade links, which could be a powerful engine for growth. Another critical step would be the full implementation of duty-free, quota-free market access by developed countries and developing countries in a position to do so, as agreed in the World Trade Organization Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2007. Developed countries must also honour the pledge to eliminate all export subsidies by 2013. Clear and simple rules of origin, allowing for regional and South-South cumulation of origin, could improve the use and value of preferential trading arrangements.

6. Since 2001, only one country — Cape Verde — had graduated from the group of least developed countries. The report made three recommendations for a future development agenda. First, both implementation and monitoring of the Brussels Programme of Action had been hampered by the lack of reliable data. The least developed countries should therefore be given support for their statistical services from data collection through to dissemination. Second, investment in gender equality must be scaled up and national budgets must be gender-responsive. Third, the financial crisis had demonstrated that all countries needed the policy space to institute counter-cyclical measures in times of need. The least developed countries needed that space in a wide range of areas, including fiscal, trade and macroeconomic policies. Member States and the Organization should redouble their efforts to ensure that the Fourth Conference delivered an ambitious development agenda that had international support.

7. **Mr. Al-Aud** (Observer for Yemen), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Group was deeply concerned about the uneven progress in achieving the targets of the Brussels Programme of Action, particularly with respect to combating poverty and hunger, achieving gender equality and reducing maternal mortality. The global financial, oil, food and climate change crises had undermined development in the least developed countries, where the number of people living in extreme poverty remained alarmingly high. Still, the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), could be achieved in those countries if their development partners met their commitments in a timely manner.

8. The Secretary-General's report (A/65/80-E/2010/77) highlighted the important role of agriculture as the largest employment sector and contributor to the economies of the least developed countries. The lack of irrigation, scientific tools and technology, seeds and fertilizer, as well as a dearth of investment, institutions and integrated farm management systems, led to low agricultural productivity, which resulted in hunger and poverty. Agricultural subsidies in developed countries created an unequal playing field for products from the least developed countries. The Group hoped to see an early conclusion of the Doha Development Round in order to establish an undistorted and equitable market that would promote rural development and contribute to world food security. It reiterated its call for enhanced productive capacity in the least developed countries, particularly in agriculture, and for greater investment in physical infrastructure and technological development.

9. The Group of 77 appreciated the work under way to prepare for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, which should define a new generation of ambitious and comprehensive measures to establish a new partnership between the least developed countries and their development partners for the next decade.

10. **Mr. Lambert** (Belgium), speaking on behalf of the European Union; the candidate country Turkey; the stabilization and association process countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; and, in addition, Norway, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, said that the European Union, as the main development partner of the least developed countries, was committed to the implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action as part of its wider commitment to the global development agenda. Development aid from the Union had focused on the least developed countries for many years. Such aid had increased substantially between 2000 and 2009 to reach 0.12 per cent of gross national income (GNI), which made it feasible for the Union to reach its collective commitment to provide at least 0.15 per cent of GNI to that group of countries. The Union continuously improved aid coordination through implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and insisted on the need to base any development strategy on national priorities and leadership. It had sought to restore debt sustainability, as both a donor and a

creditor under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Debt Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Under the Everything but Arms Initiative, the least developed countries had duty-free and quota-free access to the European Union market for all imports except arms and ammunition. All developed countries, as well as those emerging economies and developing countries in a position to do so, should grant similar access to their markets, particularly as South-South trade now accounted for half of exports from the least developed countries. Measures were also needed to upgrade and increase productive capacity, as provided for by the Brussels Programme of Action. Lastly, the European Union had adopted principles to ensure coherence in its development policy.

11. While the efforts by the European Union and other donors had played a role in the substantial growth experienced by most of the poorest countries, the Secretary-General had also warned that the economic and financial crisis could have pernicious effects. Poverty was still a reality for most citizens of the least developed countries, and disparities between urban and rural areas and gender inequality had yet to be overcome. The special needs of countries in fragile situations must also be taken into account. Sustainable improvement would depend on making progress along a number of complementary tracks. Aid in itself would not solve all problems, but it would play a crucial role as a catalyst and, by leveraging other forms of support such as investments, trade and exchange of ideas and knowledge, could ultimately reduce dependence on aid. All actors — traditional donors, emerging donors and other stakeholders — should engage in a thorough and open debate under the leadership of their partners in the least developed countries. Each of those countries must devise its own strategy according to its national characteristics. The combination of those elements would produce synergies that could lead to long-term human and economic development.

12. **Ms. Wang** (China) said that, although the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries had promoted those countries' development over the previous decade, achieving the MDGs on schedule remained a daunting challenge and had been made even more difficult by the financial crisis. A coordinated approach involving trade, investment, assistance and capacity-building was needed to support the least developed countries' development, which was the key to their timely achievement of the MDGs. Moreover, capacity-building needed to be emphasized instead of capital injection. Developed countries must honour their commitment to allocate 0.15 to 0.2 per cent of gross national product as development aid to the least developed countries and must ensure that those funds were stable and predictable. Partnerships between the least developed countries and the international community needed to be deepened and a favourable development environment created. In formulating their economic and financial policies, major Powers should pay special attention to the needs and plight of the least developed countries so as to avoid negative spillover effects on the latter. Moreover, the size, staff and resources of the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, needed to be increased in order to allow it to play a greater role in mobilizing and coordinating United Nations and international support for the least developed countries.

13. Greater emphasis needed to be placed on ensuring that the least developed countries enjoyed sustainable growth. Those countries' development achievements could be undermined by unexpected disasters and external shocks; the international community should therefore take a more prudent approach in assessing whether or not the least developed countries should graduate and satisfaction of the economic vulnerability index should be a necessary condition for graduation. In that regard, China supported the proposal by the Group of 77 to extend Samoa's graduation transition period to 1 January 2014.

14. From 2007 to 2009, China's imports from the least developed countries had grown by an annual average of 15.5 per cent, from 23.8 to 27.4 billion dollars and, since 2008, China had been their largest export market, taking 23 per cent of their total exports. In the first half of 2010, the Chinese Government and the Office of the High Representative had jointly organized capacity-building activities for the least developed countries and China would continue to work to help them achieve the MDGs on schedule.

15. **Mr. Acharya** (Nepal), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action, which embodied the principle of shared responsibility for the least developed countries' development, had produced mixed results: although some progress had been achieved the number of poor people was

increasing and only a small number of least developed countries had graduated from the least developed country category over the past decade. Poverty and deprivation constituted key obstacles to human development. Literacy had improved modestly but significant problems in bridging the gender gap in primary education remained.

16. Achievements in economic and social development, including those relating to the MDGs, had been reversed or were threatened by mutually exacerbating economic, food and fuel crises and the impact of climate change. The challenges posed by those crises required a stronger international support mechanism and a scaled-up global partnership to address those crises in a sustainable manner. At the current pace, the least developed countries would be unable to achieve most of the Brussels Programme of Action targets and the MDGs.

17. Official development assistance (ODA), which was insufficient to address those countries' vulnerabilities and pressing development needs, needed to be well-targeted. Moreover, a predictable, enhanced and sustainable flow of assistance was required if the least developed countries were to address their basic development needs and additional resources were required if they were to cope with climate change. Given their high degree of vulnerability, the least developed countries needed to be strongly represented and heard when resources were allocated. In addition, they required comprehensive debt relief from all creditors and measures to help them manage their debt burden in a sustainable fashion. It was crucial to ensure that recent gains made under the enhanced Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative were not eroded.

18. The least developed countries continued to face significant obstacles in accessing developed countries' markets. Promises which had been made by industrial nations to grant unrestricted market access to the least developed countries' exports as part of a World Trade Organization package were of little value unless such access covered all products. Preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from the least developed countries needed to be streamlined and implemented in a transparent manner. Agreements already reached on issues addressing the concerns of those countries, including duty-free market access and negotiations on services, should be implemented without waiting for all matters under discussion to be resolved. The international community should resist taking any further protectionist measures in response to the crisis, and such measures already in place must be strictly time-limited.

19. Aid for trade with the elements of transparency, predictability, stability and additionality was essential. Additional funding was also needed so that the least developed countries could increase their trading capacity. Foreign direct investment could play an important role in mobilizing much-needed resources for development, could complement ODA and should be equitably distributed among the least developed countries. Moreover, it should not be focused on a limited number of industries.

20. The least developed countries also needed access to technology for poverty alleviation. Lack of internationally agreed numerical targets had made it difficult to quantify implementation gaps in that area. However, the 2003 Plan of Action of the World Summit on the Information Society had announced 10 such targets to be achieved by 2015. Affordable access to essential medicines was also vital. Moreover, South-South and triangular cooperation, complemented by North-South cooperation could help those countries increase capacity.

21. The least developed countries and their development partners needed to engage in substantive preparations for the upcoming Fourth United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries. The role of the United Nations should be to mobilize system-wide support for that Conference and ensure coherence, and in that regard efforts by the High Representative and his Office were very much appreciated.

22. **Mr. Çorman** (Turkey) said that, although many least developed countries had undertaken economic and structural reforms and achieved high growth rates since the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2001, and although their development efforts had been facilitated because of ODA assistance and debt relief from development partners, in most of those countries there had been insufficient progress and multiple global crises had seriously undermined the progress already achieved. The international community required a long-term approach in order to address the specific challenges faced by the least developed countries. That would require enhanced international economic policy coordination and strengthened partnerships in the field

of development. Assisting those countries in their efforts to achieve sustainable development would also contribute to global economic growth, welfare and stability. All stakeholders should strive to ensure that the least developed countries were more resilient to external shocks, in particular through increased productive capacity.

23. ODA alone was insufficient to generate sustained growth and needed to be complemented by trade and private capital flows, including foreign direct investment and microfinance facilities. Job creation must remain a priority in development as its impact would be immediate on improvement of livelihoods and mobilization of medium and long-term resources. In addition, national ownership was crucial since the least developed countries themselves were in the best position to identify their own needs.

24. **Mr. Loulichki** (Morocco) said that the least developed countries had clearly demonstrated a real determination to improve their socio-economic indicators and had implemented successful national development strategies. However the objectives of the Brussels Programme of Action, including the MDGs, were seriously threatened by the crises that the world had faced in recent years. The least developed countries continued to suffer from crushing debts, inadequate infrastructure, weak productive capacity, low participation in international trade and vulnerability to disease and the effects of climate change. Moreover, low domestic savings rates and insufficient ODA meant that too few of their development needs were addressed.

25. Donor countries must honour their commitment to devote 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of gross national product to official development assistance for the least developed countries. Such assistance must be provided with no conditions attached and must support the policies and strategies of the countries concerned. Many of the least developed countries' economies continued to depend heavily on the export of commodities whose prices fluctuated widely on international markets, making growth more vulnerable to external shocks. Moreover, growth in those countries had not resulted in equivalent progress in poverty reduction and job creation. Diversification through expansion of the manufacturing sector and improvement of productive capacity was the best way to ensure sustainable growth. The international community should also help those countries invest in agriculture and achieve food security.

26. The efforts of the least developed countries to liberalize their trade had not brought the expected economic benefits. Despite initiatives to improve market access for their products, their share of global trade remained at around 1 per cent. Since their economies were highly dependent on agriculture, it was vital that the agricultural subsidies imposed by their trading partners in the developed world should be eliminated. The stalling of World Trade Organization negotiations and the delayed implementation of commitments in the Doha Round would inevitably impede the integration of the least developed countries into world trade and their attainment of development goals. In that connection, Morocco had established a number of partnerships with least developed countries in Africa in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, health, education, transport and telecommunications. It had also cancelled bilateral debt with all African least developed countries and had granted them duty-free and quota-free access to its markets.

27. **Mr. Jaiswal** (India) said that in order for equitable, balanced and sustainable global growth to be achieved, the fruits of development and progress must be shared among countries. His Government had steadfastly supported efforts to strengthen the development process in the least developed countries and to make them institutionally strong and economically resilient so that they could overcome their myriad challenges. Long hampered by extreme poverty, the structural weaknesses of their economies and their lack of growth-related capacities, those countries had been pushed further down the development ladder by the current financial and other crises. They had made a great effort to achieve the goals set forth in the Brussels Programme of Action but although a number of them had increased their GDP and improved their education outcomes, those achievements had not translated into poverty reduction or economic growth.

28. In preparation for the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, to be held in Istanbul in 2011, it was time to rethink strategies of engagement with the least developed countries and to develop a more targeted, need- and situation-specific programme of action. The Conference would provide an opportunity for the international community to renew its commitment to a

global partnership with those countries, including by meeting ODA targets, and to expand the choice of tools available for that purpose. A meaningful framework for that endeavour might include promoting agricultural development and ensuring food security; strengthening productive capacities and resource mobilization and targeting aid to the production sectors; developing infrastructures; improving market access; managing climate change, sustainable development and the environment; and accelerating progress towards the MDGs.

29. Through South-South cooperation, India had been privileged to share its development experience, financial and technological resources and expertise with the least developed countries — including Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, the Maldives and other countries of its region and beyond — in the areas of trade, increased connectivity and capacity-building. Its development partnership with Afghanistan was helping to rebuild that country and it was providing assistance to African countries through initiatives such as Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement (Team-9), the Pan-African e-network, aid for trade, scientific training and infrastructure upgrades. Since 2008, its duty-free tariff preference scheme had been extended to all the least developed countries and it had provided $250,000 in funding for the organization of the Istanbul Conference.

30. **Mr. Farias** (Brazil) said that the least developed countries' limited progress in the area of poverty reduction, highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General (E/2010/77), was of real concern. The economic crisis had taken longer to reach those countries because of their weak links to the world's financial centres, but its impact would be felt for some time. Social protection policies and measures were critical components of national and international responses to the crises faced by developing countries. The international community should provide technical and financial support for policies aimed at generating income and employment and strengthening initiatives such as school feeding programmes, cash-for-work, conditional cash transfers and risk insurance related to agricultural production and health.

31. Increased agricultural productivity must be pursued and while duty-free and quota-free access to the agricultural products of the least developed countries — measures that his Government had applied — were steps in the right direction, they would be meaningless unless non-tariff trade barriers were eliminated. It was therefore crucial to bring the Doha Round of multilateral trade negotiations to an ambitious and fair conclusion.

32. The feasibility of the adoption of countercyclical measures in the least developed countries must be assessed in the context of their limited domestic revenue, tight national budgets, high social spending requirements and external credit constraints. Fiscal and monetary prudence was therefore called for. On the other hand, those countries had shown a high average growth rate during the period preceding the financial crisis.

33. The Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries would provide an opportunity to assess South-South cooperation initiatives aimed at enhancing the national capacities of developing countries. The Conference should also consider the role of the Organization in helping Governments to emerge from risk situations and make the transition from relief to development at a time when national institutions still found it difficult to function. Measures to ensure a smooth "graduation" from least-developed-country status were also needed in order to avoid disruption in the provision of aid for national priorities. He hoped that the participants in the Conference would commit themselves to the creation of a more pro-development international system in which all policies would take into account the broader development consequences.

34. Lastly, he recognized the efforts of the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States to direct international attention to the least developed countries and to prepare for the Istanbul Conference. He welcomed the Turkish Government's willingness to host that event and pledged his country's support for the endeavour.

35. **Mr. Kim** Chang Mo (Republic of Korea) said that his Government valued the guidance provided by the report of the Secretary-General. It regarded the Istanbul Conference as an opportunity to focus efforts on key activities and revitalize support for the least developed countries, which, despite their achievements under several of the MDGs, remained far behind in many critical areas. Of particular concern was the slowness of poverty reduction, noted in the outcome

documents of the two regional meetings on implementation of the Brussels Programme of Action.

36. Because of its multiple impacts, including job creation and poverty reduction, the effort to strengthen the human capacities of the least developed countries, particularly in technological areas, was a priority. His Government had supported the E-business and Training Programme, which helped women managers and policymakers from developing countries to establish e-businesses, and Korean Internet Volunteers offered basic computer training to the general public in developing countries. The least developed countries could also benefit from trading schemes that provided duty-free, quota-free market access. His Government provided such access and was increasing its aid-for-trade and other trade-related technical cooperation measures.

37. The challenges posed by climate change and the global financial, food and energy crises could be met through investment in green growth. His Government supported efforts to promote a "green new deal for least developed countries". Both private and public financing could help to build a more resilient economy and to ensure that those countries need not choose between economic growth and protection of their natural resources.

38. Gender mainstreaming was important in the least developed countries, where women were an important factor in accelerating development. While the newly established UN Women would have an important role to play, national measures aimed at increasing women's involvement in politics would have the greatest impact.

39. **Ms. Beck** (Solomon Islands) said that like all least developed countries, the Solomon Islands faced challenges in the areas of infrastructure development, agricultural food production, deteriorating terms of trade, maternal mortality, inadequate access to water and sanitation and inability to provide affordable medicine to treat diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and diabetes. Those problems were further exacerbated by the impact of the global food, energy and financial/economic crises and the resulting unemployment, hunger and malnutrition, poverty, inequality and high mortality rates, which severely hindered efforts to achieve the MDGs. More assistance was needed as a complement to national efforts to contain the effects of the crisis and deliver services to the rural areas where the majority of the population lived.

40. The global nature of the current crises made it necessary for development partners to meet their commitments under the Brussels Programme of Action. Technology transfer and rural infrastructure development could stimulate agricultural food production. She appealed to the least developed countries' trading partners to help them secure more favourable terms of trade, including trade preferences and elimination of trade-distorting measures, so that they could increase their share of trade and cope with the high prices of food imports. Her delegation supported the Group of 77 and China in its call to extend Samoa's transition to graduation from least-developed-country status to 2014 and called for a review of the graduation index that would take into account the seriousness of the least developed countries' vulnerability.

41. Fuel costs accounted for a third of the national budgets of least developed countries. That was particularly true of small island developing States in the Pacific, owing to their geographical isolation and dependence on fuel imports. She called on those who could provide appropriate technology and resources to assist those States in developing renewable energy.

42. The survival and livelihood of countries like her own were threatened by the impact of climate change, which included loss of arable land as a result of rising sea levels and coastal erosion, salination of water sources and loss of fishing grounds and marine biodiversity. She urged the international community and the United Nations, through the Council, to provide rapid access to resources and technology transfer in support of national adaptation and mitigation efforts.

43. Last, she called on the United Nations system and the international community to support the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, congratulated the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States on his appointment as Secretary-General for the Conference and commended his Office for its efforts to move the process forward.

Coordination, programme and other questions (*continued*)

(a) Reports of coordination bodies

(b) Proposed strategic framework for the period 2010-2013

(g) Tobacco or health

Social and human rights questions

(i) Genetic privacy and non-discrimination

44. **Mr. Bettcher** (World Health Organization), introducing the sixth report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control, said that the World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on Tobacco Control which had entered into force in 2005, had 169 Parties and covered over 85 per cent of the world's population. It comprised a comprehensive multisectoral approach and measures to combat the tobacco epidemic. Inter alia, it contained supply and demand side measures, and provisions on scientific, technical and international cooperation. It required Parties to establish multisectoral coordinating mechanisms and to develop and implement comprehensive multisectoral national tobacco control plans, programmes and strategies. Parties reporting on the implementation of that Convention had mentioned the following problems: lack of adequate technical and financial resources; weakness or lack of national legislation and/or rules and regulations for implementation; insufficient public information and lack of public and media awareness; lack of capacities for tobacco control; interference of the tobacco industry and lack of effective taxation policies.

45. There was an established link between tobacco and poverty. The report recommended strengthening inter-agency support for integrating tobacco control and the implementation of WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control within and through the United Nations Development Assistance Framework at country level. It also recommended that the Task Force should meet to discuss strengthening the multisectoral and inter-agency response to tobacco control.

46. Data revealed that more girls were using tobacco. Furthermore, many women lived with men who smoked regularly and were thus exposed to tobacco smoke. Annually, second-hand tobacco smoke killed 600,000 persons but women were disproportionately affected and 64 per cent of the 430,000 adult deaths were women. The tobacco industry was targeting women because only about 9 per cent of women smoked compared with 40 per cent of men. Gender-specific tobacco control strategies were needed to ensure that tobacco use among young girls and women did not continue to increase. Women should participate fully at all levels of policymaking and in the implementation of tobacco control measures. Collaboration with the secretariat of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women was to be encouraged in order to increase awareness of the gender aspect of tobacco use.

47. For women, smoking increased the risk of infertility, complications during pregnancy and maternal death. In children, it increased the risk of stillbirths, neonatal death and sudden infant death syndrome, preterm birth and low birth weight. It also increased the incidence of lower respiratory infections and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder among young children. Tobacco use was thus directly linked with MDG 4 (Reduce child mortality) and MDG 5 (Improve maternal health). The United Nations bodies working in the area of maternal and child health must collaborate to reduce the risks posed by tobacco use. Awareness needed to be raised at the country-level of the importance of tobacco-free communities and professional organizations of doctors and nurses needed to be encouraged to engage in tobacco control activities.

48. Work should also be initiated with the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues to raise awareness of the fact that tobacco use was more prevalent among indigenous populations than among the general population. Furthermore, one of the most significant challenges was to combat the tobacco industry's attempts at corporate social responsibility and its involvement as a "partner" in the "reasonable" regulation of tobacco products, involving in some cases the United Nations. The United Nations Goodwill Ambassador Programme must be re-evaluated to ensure that no tobacco industry-sponsored person represented the Organization.

49. Discarded cigarette butts contained hundreds of carcinogenic and radioactive chemicals. The secretariat of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, WHO and the United Nations Environment Programme needed to prepare a joint technical document to raise awareness of that issue.

50. Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 63/8, the sale of tobacco products and indoor smoking at United Nations Headquarters had been banned. The resolution also called for such bans to be extended to all United Nations premises and, pursuant to its adoption, the Secretary-General had implemented a comprehensive strategy for smoke-free United Nations premises that informed staff, delegations and visitors of the complete smoking ban. Member States' representatives and staff members had provided very positive feedback and support for the measures taken in that regard.

51. The Council's focus on gender equality and women's empowerment was most relevant to tobacco control. Tackling the epidemic of tobacco among women was an important part of any comprehensive tobacco control strategy. The Council's resolution on tobacco and maternal and child health, the negotiations on which were facilitated by Uruguay, would raise awareness of the importance of tobacco control in reducing health risks for mothers and children.

52. **Ms. Alfsen** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) said that three instruments adopted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) — the Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997), the International Declaration on Human Genetic Data (2003) and the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (2005) — constituted the approved international framework in the field of bioethics, including genetics, and that the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics, which involved intergovernmental organizations both within and outside the Organization, was an important ad hoc mechanism.

53. In that context, and pursuant to Council decision 2008/233, UNESCO was consulting with Member States on relevant developments in the field of genetic privacy and non-discrimination and on a possible inter-agency coordination mechanism through a questionnaire that sought to determine whether States had specific legislation on the issue or addressed it through more general legislation and to identify other non-legislative mechanisms on genetic privacy and non-discrimination. Consultations with United Nations agencies and other intergovernmental organizations were also ongoing. UNESCO expected to be able to report on the outcome of those efforts in 2011.

54. **Mr. Birichevskiy** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had studied the annual review report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination (CEB) and noted that integrating the United Nations Development Group into the CEB had facilitated more effective links between programme activities, strategic planning and working practices at the country level and had also enhanced United Nations system-wide coherence. Inter alia, the CEB was, rightly, continuing to respond to the world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development. However, Member States required more information on the progress achieved towards implementing the nine joint initiatives to address the crisis approved by the CEB in April 2009. Furthermore, the second report on the "Global Pulse" initiative, which evaluated impacts of the crisis and vulnerability, had not provided sufficient information. The CEB needed to publish, on the United Nations website, regular updates on measures taken to respond to the crisis and on progress achieved. Moreover, a feedback mechanism needed to be established with the Council in order to facilitate the implementation of anti-crisis measures, including the CEB initiative.

55. The procedures for considering CEB reports at Council sessions needed to be streamlined. The coordination segment was the most appropriate slot for consideration of the reports submitted by the CEB. It was unfortunate that there had been no opportunity to discuss that report at the current session. If agenda item 7 (a) were moved to the coordination segment, it would strengthen that segment while also streamlining the general segment agenda.

56. The delegation of Uruguay was to be commended for its preparation of the Council's draft resolution on tobacco control. That resolution rightly focused on the use of tobacco and its effects on reproductive and child health, in the context of attaining MDGs 4 and 5. It was disquieting to learn that tobacco use was rising among young girls and women, since tobacco smoke had a serious impact on maternal and child health and on child mortality. It was important to intensify efforts to control tobacco use and to integrate measures on tobacco control into national, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation programmes. His delegation supported the Secretary-General's call for a special meeting of the Ad Hoc Interagency Task Force on Tobacco Control to explore ways of facilitating

implementation of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control.

57. Issues of genetic privacy and non-discrimination, in terms of their interdisciplinary nature, were considered by the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee on Bioethics. His delegation supported the proposal of the Director-General of UNESCO to defer consideration of those issues until the Council's substantive session in 2011 and requested that she submit a report to the Council on consultations with Member States, on analysis conducted by the Inter-Agency Committee and on the exchange of opinions between United Nations bodies and NGOs.

58. **Ms. Belakhel** (Morocco) said that combating non-transmissible diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases and cancer, was a priority for the Moroccan Ministry of Health. Tobacco was targeted because it was the highest risk factor for most of those diseases. Morocco had initiated a national anti-tobacco programme in 1988 which aimed to protect non-smokers, promote non-smoking in sports, encourage smokers to stop smoking and ban the promotion of tobacco. That programme also aimed to raise awareness of the risks associated with tobacco use and promoted the promulgation of anti-smoking legislation. Moreover, the Ministry of Health had carried out studies to monitor tobacco use and risk factors for cardiovascular diseases, including a 2006 study on young people aged 13 to 15.

59. In 2009, combating tobacco use had been incorporated into the National Plan for Cancer Prevention and Control, which had been drawn up by the Ministry of Health and the Lalla Salma Association for the Fight against Cancer. That plan aimed, inter alia, to prevent tobacco use, warn smokers of the dangers of tobacco while encouraging them to stop smoking, protect non-smokers, reduce access to tobacco products, support the ratification of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, establish measures for the implementation of relevant national legislation, mobilize anti-tobacco associations and establish a multisectoral entity to monitor tobacco consumption and follow up on anti-tobacco activities.

60. Passive exposure to tobacco smoke was never without danger. An acceptable level of protection could only be provided through mandating smoke-free areas. Act No. 1591 prohibited smoking in certain public places and the advertising of tobacco. Moreover, the Ministry of Health was establishing smoke- and tobacco-free areas in hospitals, as well as in businesses, colleges and schools. In that regard, a ban affecting 31 schools in three regions had been piloted in 2007. In 2010, that ban would be extended to cover all educational institutions in Morocco.

61. Tobacco was a lucrative crop but gave rise to high socio-economic and health-related costs. Tobacco growers needed assistance in finding alternative crops. Concrete and long-term institutional support in that regard from specialized intergovernmental organizations, including, in particular, the Food and Agriculture Organization, WHO and the World Bank, was essential.

62. Although the MDGs did not focus on non-transmissible diseases, it was increasingly acknowledged that the anti-tobacco struggle was an important element in development. However, initial research by WHO indicated that anti-tobacco activities had not yet been incorporated into poverty reduction strategies at the national level. WHO would propose that anti-tobacco strategies should be included in national development programmes. Input on that matter from organizations such as the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund would be invaluable.

63. Although Morocco had taken important steps to combat tobacco use, such steps would only bear fruit if they were part of a national multisectoral strategy that incorporated the anti-tobacco struggle. In that regard, ratification of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control was a positive step which would help protect Moroccan citizens from the health, socio-economic and environmental effects of active and passive smoking. Technical and financial support was still required to ensure that anti-tobacco measures were implemented. Moreover, taxes on tobacco should be increased significantly.

64. **The President** drew attention to the annual overview report of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for 2009/2010 (E/2010/69) and the report of the Committee for Programme and Coordination on its fiftieth session (A/65/16) and suggested that the Council should take note of those documents.

65. *It was so decided.*

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.